Brown School EBP Handbook

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Chapter 3: Locating data and information relative to a practice issue

Students will

- Recognize valid, reliable, authoritative sources,
- Become familiar with finding and using a variety of sources,
- Recognize different databases and their content,
- Review guideline sources,
- Explore tests, measures, and other tools.

Using print or online materials

Primary and secondary literature

Research studies are presented in many forms. One form of study is the researcher’s write-up of his/her own investigation. The report often includes the problem being researched, the way the research was conducted, the results, and the interpretation of the results. This is considered primary literature - what actually happened as explained by the researcher.

Other studies focus on the research results of others—sometimes a review of similar research studies, methodologies, subjects, etc. These are considered to be secondary literature. Several resources deal with results of secondary literature. If the research analyzes similar study groups or situations, the research may be reported in a database like the Cochrane Library or the Campbell Collaboration. When searching in either of these databases, you are assured that the results have been critically reviewed. Both collaborations have very stringent criteria for inclusion of material in their databases.

Finding useful material in any of the other sources listed below requires more of your time. You will need to analyze the research, experiment, or research design, the results, and the conclusion(s). Primary literature requires that you use your statistical and observational knowledge and analyze not just the results that the author is pointing out, but also every part of the research under discussion to make sure it has been designed, executed, analyzed and computed properly.

When searching for evidence in the literature for treatment effectiveness the following terms may apply to the evidence-based process:

“Best Practices”
“Practice Guidelines”
“Empirically Supported Treatments”
“Empirically Based Practices”
“Evidence Based Practices”

The language is not uniform, and locating valid information requires time, creativity, and at times, a thesaurus.
Catalogs (How to find materials at Washington University):
The Brown School provides access to numerous print and electronic resources in its library collection. Searching the library catalog retrieves items that include information on evidence-based practice in a general overview and in a variety of focused fields. The catalog includes books, journal titles, videos and CDs, and other materials owned by all of the libraries on Washington University’s Danforth and West campuses. The catalog does NOT INCLUDE material held in the Becker Medical School library. You need to search the Becker Medical School Library’s catalog separately for items held there (more information about that later). You can search the following fields in the library’s catalog:

- Author
- Title
- Keyword
- Subject

We encourage you to attend brief library sessions on how to search the catalog. The sessions provide detailed information and hands-on instruction. It is time well spent.

Becker Medical School catalog (How to see what the Med School has – they’re just east of Forest Park- use the bus or Metrolink)
The Becker Medical School Library catalog can be searched from on or off campus. A link to the Becker Medical catalog is at the bottom of the classic catalog screen. If you find a title of interest in the Becker Medical Library, you may check it out at the Medical School Library circulation desk. Becker Library items must be returned to the Becker Library. Consider using MOBIUS to request the book. Or, you can request the item using the ILLiad interlibrary loan system. For more details on MOBIUS or ILLiad, see the paragraphs below.

MOBIUS (Getting books not owned by WUSTL)
The Washington University libraries belong to a consortium of libraries in Missouri that provide reciprocal borrowing arrangements. When a book is not available through the library catalog, click on the “Search MOBIUS” icon on the search screen. The system will perform the same search in the MOBIUS catalog.

Select the title being searched for, click on REQUEST to complete the request form. Choose the pick-up location and submit the request. The item will be delivered to the pick-up location in approximately 3 -4 business days. A notification will be sent to the requestor’s email address indicating that the item is available for pick-up. When done with the book, return it to the Brown School Library for return to the lending institution. When an item is needed more quickly, scroll down to where you can see who owns the item. If an institution is near enough to visit, you may check the item out from that MOBIUS library using your Washington University ID card. Items borrowed this way may then be returned to the Brown School Library for return.
ILLiad *(Ways to get materials not owned by WUSTL)*
The Washington University libraries are able to get research materials through an interlibrary borrowing arrangement called ILLiad. The library pays all charges for the materials. Therefore, ILLiad loans are free to you. It is necessary to provide as much bibliographic information as possible about the material you need in order to identify the item. Articles requested through Iliad usually arrive within 2 business days. Book requests may take 2 – 3 weeks. Therefore, request items as soon as possible. ILLiad items may be returned to the Brown School Library circulation desk.

The library provides brief information sessions on how to use these resources. Feel free to attend any session of interest.

**Databases** *(places you can go to search for articles, dissertations, etc.)*
The libraries subscribe to over 300 subject specific databases. In many of these databases, you can set up free accounts and save your search strategies. Consider attending one of the library sessions that demonstrates how to use this feature. Consult the database page on the Brown School Library webpage. The database page lists resources that will help you locate material specific to the study of public health and social work. Many other databases can be found on Olin Library's web pages. We encourage you to explore other resources, especially when researching interdisciplinary topics such as political science, economics, engineering, architecture, spirituality, etc.

The databases listed in this guide and on the libraries’ web pages index many scholarly journals. Databases such as Gender Studies index journals in a specific area. Databases such as Academic Search Complete or SocIndex with full text have more general subject coverage. The publishers hire indexers to review articles and assign subject headings, class headings and other codes to each article of a journal. Therefore, you can retrieve articles using a variety of search methods.

The following databases, plus many others, should be consulted for evidence-based literature. Do not hesitate to consult with a librarian about which source to use when you need EBP articles for your classes. The * indicates a focus on evidence-based research or databases with an evidence-based limit.

- **Academic Search Complete**
  Journal index. Includes over 8,000 journals with full text for over 4,500. Covers most academic disciplines.

- **Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts (ASSIA)**
  Journal index geared toward the “practical and academic professional”. This resource is multidisciplinary covering over 650 journals published worldwide.

- **Campbell Collaboration**
  “C2’s objectives are to prepare, maintain, and disseminate systematic reviews of studies of social interventions, and to make their findings accessible to decision makers and the general public.”
- **CINAHL Plus (Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature)**
  “CINAHL Plus covers nursing, biomedicine, health sciences librarianship, alternative/complementary medicine, consumer health and 17 allied health disciplines.”

- **Cochrane Library**
  “Contains high-quality, independent evidence to inform healthcare decision-making. It includes reliable evidence from Cochrane and other systematic reviews, clinical trials, and more…” for the best evidence for health care and health related matters.

- **ERIC - Education Resources Information Center**
  References to thousands of educational topics. Includes journal articles, books, theses, curriculii, conference papers, and standards and guidelines.

- **Family & Society Studies Worldwide**
  Includes journals, conferences, reports, books, etc. This database combines four previous databases into one with over 700,000 records.

- **MEDLINE via PubMed**
  [http://pubmed.gov](http://pubmed.gov)
  Provided by the National Library of Medicine to health professionals, researchers, and consumers. Medline includes authoritative, current medical information and information on quality of life and psychological issues. Search filters are provided for evidence-based article retrieval.

- **PILOTS - Published International Literature on Stress (1871-)**
  “The PILOTS database is an electronic index to the worldwide literature on post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other mental-health consequences of exposure to traumatic events. It is produced by the National Center for PTSD, and is electronically available to the public.”

- **PsycInfo**
  Journal index. Journal articles, chapters, books, dissertations and reports on psychology and related fields. Updated monthly
➢ **Social Services Abstracts**  
Journal index. Indexes current research focused on social work, human services, and related areas. Includes social welfare, social policy, and community development.

➢ **Social Work Abstracts**  
Journal index. Produced by the National Association of Social Workers, Inc. This database contains more than 35,000 records from social work and other related journals on topics such as homelessness, AIDS, child and family welfare, aging, substance abuse, legislation, community organization, and more.

➢ **SocINDEX**  
Journal index. Abstracts and indexes the international literature related to sociology, social work, and related disciplines in the social and behavioral sciences.

➢ **TRIP database**  
A database with some full text materials on evidence-based health and behavioral science research topics. Has multiple search options.

### Other Internet resources

**Google scholar**

Check out [Google Scholar](http://www.google.com) for articles from journals, book chapters, reports, conference, presentations, and some gray literature that is usually very difficult to obtain. The advantage of Google is that you enter questions in a normal sentence and get results. The disadvantage of Google is that you may be overwhelmed by the number of results returned. You cannot build up your search strategy to combine and recombine statements depending on the results. This is where you will find the databases to be much more powerful and useful.

Read the help pages of Google in order to eliminate some material from your search results so your retrieval is not in the millions. Use the advanced search screens to develop your search strategy. If there are too many results, consider using a database where you can structure your search strategy and get what you really want.

**Guidelines** *(what does the evidence say you should do?)*

Guidelines are “systematically developed statements” (Nakayama, 2007) providing a course of action or treatment. Practice Guidelines tell you what the best practices are for diagnoses, treatment, etc. They provide a quick source of information applicable to a situation. Yet, the discussion concerning the applicability of guidelines indicates that
there is some disagreement. When a guideline is available, you and your client need to evaluate it for appropriateness. Remember: In all situations when implementing the EBP process it is essential to use your judgment combined with your client’s culture, values, wants, and circumstances.

When guidelines exist, evaluate the components and findings for applicability in your situation. There are many guidelines on the web and in printed sources. You should investigate them whenever searching for information.

California Evidence Based Clearinghouse
http://www.cebc4cw.org/

CMA Infobase Clinical Practice Guidelines
https://www.cma.ca/En/Pages/clinical-practice-guidelines.aspx

Cochrane Library
http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/mrwhome/106568753/HOME?CRETRY=1&SRETRY=0

EPPI Centre
http://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/cms/

Evidence-Based Mental Health
http://ebmh.bmj.com/

Evidence Based Practice for the Helping Professions

The National Guideline Clearinghouse

National Quality Measures Clearinghouse
http://www.qualitymeasures.ahrq.gov/

Also consider searching in databases or catalogs for your topic and the term “guideline” or “guidelines.”
Websites
Websites provide information and are useful for easy, quick access. Be sure to evaluate every website for the following before accepting the advice and information presented:

- Do you know who is responsible for the material? Are they known “experts” in the field? Can you get in touch with them when you need additional information about the site’s content?
- Is the material there to inform or persuade? Websites with the.edu or .gov extension are usually scholarly and informational. Sites with .com or .org may need further evaluation to determine their viewpoints and reasons for publishing the site.
- Is the material factual? (Is it based on fact? Authenticated? Is the material a testimonial?)
- Can you determine the currency of the information? Good sites provide a date so you can easily determine whether the site has current information or is out of date.

The Internet provides a wealth of additional information that can be used when researching a topic. Just be certain that you are looking at and using scholarly research material. Remember the basics of web evaluation.

Tests and measures
There are multiple resources for tests, measures, and scales that may be used when working with clients. Check for valid measures in many of the sources listed above. Always evaluate the tool for applicability to the current situation and client. Sometimes the tool needed is in a collection owned by your library, your institution, your agency, or a colleague. The school’s webpage and the Research Guides listing of full text measures can assist in locating existing tools. If nothing is available, consider developing your own tool and making it available to other researchers.

National Quality Measures Clearinghouse
http://www.qualitymeasures.ahrq.gov/